

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 117853

O 121511Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2640

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 6258

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, US, CB

SUBJ: EVACUATION OF KEY INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL

CAMBODIA B NO. 6

SUMMARY:

THIS MESSAGE OUTLINES ACTIONS TAKEN BY AMBASSADOR DEAN AND THE EMBASSY PHNOM PENH STAFF IN CONNECTION WITH EFFORTS TO EVACUATE CAMBODIAN KEY INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL ON APRIL 12, 1975. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS MADE PERSONALLY BY AMBASSADOR DEAN WITH ACTING PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KOY, PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET, FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM, AND HIGH ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT SIRIK MATAK, MESSENGERS FROM EACH OF THEM WERE ASKED TO BE AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE EACH MORNING AT 0650 TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATIONS, REQUESTS FOR MEETINGS BY EITHER SIDE, AND THE LIKE, BECAUSE OF DETERIORATING STATE OF TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CITY. GIVEN THE GENERAL SITUATION, IT MUST HAVE BEEN FAIRLY CLEAR TO EACH OF THESE PERSONS THAT A MAJOR REASON FOR THESE ARRANGEMENTS WAS TO COMMUNICATE INTENTIONS CONCERNING FUTURE U.S. PLANS, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF EVACUATION OF THE EMBASSY. AMBASSADOR DEAN VISITED SIRIK MATAK AT HIS HOME THE EVENING OF APRIL 11 IN ORDER TO INSTITUTE THIS PROCEDURE WITH HIM. HE HAD DONE SO WITH THE OTHER THREE

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EARLIER IN THE WEEK.

2. AT 0650 ON APRIL 12 THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS DELIVERED TO THE MESSENGERS OF THESE FOUR OFFICIALS, IN BOTH ENGLISH AND FRENCH VERSIONS.

QUOTE: I HAVE RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN WASHINGTON TO ARRANGE THE IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE OF ALL THE AMERICAN CITIZENS REMAINING IN PHNOM PENH AND OF THOSE OF OUR KHMER EMPLOYEES WHO WISH TO DEPART WITH US BECAUSE THEIR LIVES MIGHT BE IN DANGER IF THEY REMAINED BEHIND.

AS I EXPLAINED TO YOU RECENTLY, WE WILL HAVE A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PLACES ON OUR AIRCRAFT FOR THE KEY MEMBERS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT WHO WISH TO DEPART THE COUNTRY NOW. AS I STATED TO YOU, THE DECISION AS TO WHOM THIS OFFER SHOULD BE MADE IS UP TO YOU, AND I AM DEPENDING ON YOU TO NOTIFY THE PEOPLE IN QUESTION. THOSE WHO DECIDE TO GO SHOULD BRING ONLY THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS WITH THEM (WIFE AND CHILDREN) AS THERE WILL NOT BE SPACE FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE. PLEASE NOTIFY THE PEOPLE YOU THINK SHOULD GO AND WOULD WANT TO GO JUST AS FAST AS POSSIBLE, AS THE TIME FOR DEPARTURE IS VERY SHORT.

THOSE WHO WISH TO GO SHOULD COME TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY CHANCERY (THE BUILDING WHERE WE HAVE OUR OFFICES) IMMEDIATELY. EACH PERSON SHOULD BRING WITH HIM AS HAND BAGGAGE ONLY ONE SMALL STACHEL OR BAG WHICH CAN BE CARRIED ON THE LAP. THE DEADLINE FOR DEPARTURE FROM OUR EMBASSY COMPOUND IS 0930 HOURS THIS MORNING. ANYONE ARRIVING AFTER THAT TIME WILL HAVE MISSED HIS CHANCE TO LEAVE WITH US. I CANNOT STRESS TOO STRONGLY THAT THE DEADLINE IS 0930, TWO AND A HALF HOURS FROM NOW. SINCERELY, JOHN GUNTHER DEAN, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. UNQUOTE.

3. SHORTLY AFTER 0700 AMBASSADOR DEAN WENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE, AWAKENED HIM, AND MADE CERTAIN THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER. HE THEN ASKED TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS TO TELEPHONE INDIVIDUALLY CERTAIN KEY MINISTERS WHO HAD BEEN ESPECIALLY IDENTIFIED WITH KHMER RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE FOLLOWING WERE REACHED DIRECTLY BY TELEPHONE BETWEEN 0730 AND 0800: PAN SOTHI (THROUGH HIS WIFE), HOU HONG, KHY TAING LIM, KONG ORN, AND LONG BOTTA. EFFORTS TO REACH HANG THUN HAK BY TELEPHONE WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. ALL WERE TOLD THAT THEY MUST BE AT THE EMBASSY BY 0900 IF THEY WISHED TO ACCEPT OUR INVITATION TO LEAVE WITH US.

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4. ACTING PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KHOY ARRIVED AT THE EMBASSY AT ABOUT 0830, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE AND A PART OF FAMILY MEMBERS TALLING 16 ADDITIONAL PERSONS, BESIDES THE PRESIDENT AND HIS WIFE. SHORTLY THEREAFTER ARRIVED, FOLLOWED BY MRS. PAN SOTHI WITH HER TWO SMALL CHILDREN. ALL OF THESE PERSONS HAD BEEN PROCESSED IN THE BACK OF THE EMBASSY COMPOUND FOR DEPARTURE WHEN A MESSENGER ARRIVED FROM PAN SOTHI WITH A NOTE IN KHMER FOR HIS WIFE. AN EMBOFF RUSHED TO THE BACK OF THE COMPOUND WHERE MRS. PAN SOTHI AND CHILDREN WERE ON A TRUCK ABOUT TO BE DRIVEN TO THE LANDING ZONE. THIS WAS SHORTLY AFTER 0900. SHE READ THE NOTE AND TOLD THE EMBOFF THAT HER HUSBAND SAID HE WAS WAITING AT LONG BORET'S HOUSE WITH OTHER MINISTERS FOR PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KHOY. KNOWING THAT SAUKHAM KHOY HAD ALREADY DEPARTED FOR THE LZ, THE EMBOFF IMMEDIATELY NOTIFIED THE AMBASSADOR OF THIS APPARENT CONFUSION, WHICH WAS ALL THE MORE URGENT, SINCE THE EMBASSY GATES WERE TO BE CLOSED ONCE AND FOR ALL AT 0930. (WE ACTUALLY KEPT THE GATES OPEN UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 0945.)

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 117918

O 121511Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2641

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EXDIS

CAMBODIA B NO. 6

5. THE AMBASSADOR THEN SENT POLITICAL COUNSELOR PERKINS TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE IN ORDER TO TELL HIM AND HIS MINISTERS THAT IF THEY WISHED TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THE AIR-LIFT, THEY MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY IN ORDER TO REACH THE EMBASSY IN TIME. AT LONG BORET'S RESIDENCE PERKINS FOUND A CABINET MEETING IN FULL PROGRESS IN THE DINING ROOM. LONG BORET, HOU HONG AND PAN SOTHI CAME TO THE LIVING ROOM

TO INFORM PERKINS THAT THE CABINET AS A WHOLE HAD DECIDED NOT TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION TO DEPART WITH US. THE SCENE WAS RATHER EMOTIONAL, AS ALL KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THIS MEANT, AND THERE WERE WARM FAREWELLS. SEPARATELY HOU HONG ASKED PERKINS TO SEND ON TO HIS WIFE, WHO IS IN A HOSPITAL IN TAIPEI, SOME U.S. CURRENCY FOR HER NEEDS. THEN PAN SOTHI TOLD PERKINS SEPARATELY THAT HE, PAN SOTHI, REALLY WANTED TO GO, BUT DID NOT FEEL HE COULD GO AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE REST OF THE CABINET. HE ASKED PERKINS TO MAKE SURE THAT MRS. PAN SOTHI AND THE CHILDREN DEPARTED SAFELY AND ASKED THAT SHE ATTEMPT TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIM FROM BANGKOK. PERKINS WAS ABLE TO COMMUNICATE THIS MESSAGE IN THE HELICOPTER THAT CARRIED THEM BOTH OUT.

6. MEANWHILE THE AMBASSADOR HAD EARLIER IN THE MORNING RECEIVED BY MESSENGER A HANDWRITTEN REPLY FROM SIRIK MATAK TO THE AMBASSADOR'S LETTER QUOTED ABOVE. THE REPLY, WHICH WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEPTEL, DECLINED THE OFFER TO DEPART, AND AS PERKINS LEFT LONG BORET'S HOUSE TO RETURN  
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TO THE EMBASSY, HE MET SIRIK MATAK ARRIVING FOR THE CABINET MEETING THEN IN SESSION.

7. THE NET RESULT OF ALL OF THIS WAS THAT THE TOTAL OF TRUE KEY INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL WHO ACCEPTED OUR OFFER WAS THE ACTING PRESIDENT AND HIS FAMILY, ONE MINISTER, AND THE WIFE AND CHILDREN OF ANOTHER. WE HAD PREVIOUSLY EVACUATED BY FIXED WING AIRCRAFT THREE CHILDREN OF ANOTHER (KONG ORN).

8. ON THE MILITARY SIDE, ONLY ONE FANK OFFICER A MAJOR CHEA LYAENG HORN, WAS EVACUATED WITH HIS FAMILY. THIS OFFICER WAS A PART OF BG GEN. KOURODETH'S STAFF (THE FANK J-2), WHO WAS KNOWN TO DAO AS THE BEST ORDER OF BATTLE EXPERT IN FANK. A DAY OR TWO BEFORE, GEN. KOURODETH HAD INQUIRED OF THE DATT RE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR HIS LEAVING WITH US. SINCE HE HAS BEEN J-2 FOR TEN YEARS AND SHOULD BE A MARKED MAN, THE REQUEST WAS NOT SURPRISING. HOWEVER, AT ABOUT 0845 ON APRIL 12 GEN. KOURODETH CAME TO THE EMBASSY, ACCOMPANIED BY MAJOR HORN, SAW OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE, AND EXPLAINED WITH SOME EMOTION THAT HE COULD NOT LEAVE. THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT SOME DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN WITHIN THE UPPER LEVELS OF FANK THAT NO SENIOR OFFICER SHOULD DEPART. ANOTHER MISSING GENERAL WHO HAD ASKED TO GO A FEW DAYS BEFORE WAS THE FANK MUNITIONS CONTROLLER, B.G. SAR BUON. LATER MAJOR HORN REAPPEARED WITH HIS FAMILY REQUESTING EVAUCATION.

9. AS SOON AS PERKINS RETURNED TO THE COMPOUND AT ABOUT 0940 WITH WORD THAT NONE OF THE CABIENT WOULD BE LEAVING,

ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE TO WIND UP THE EVACUATION SPEEDILY,  
AND AMBASSADOR DEAN AND THE REMAINING HANDFUL OF OFFICIAL  
EMBASSY PERSONNEL LEFT THE COMPOUND FOR THE LANDING ZONE AT  
ABOUT 0955.

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## Message Attributes

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